SYNTHESIS

AN ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN NEWSLETTER FOR CITIZEN-WORKER SELF-MANAGEMENT IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

JULY 1975 ISSUE #1

AN INTRODUCTION

SYNTHESIS hopes it will be able to add to the effectiveness of the rather diffuse worldwide movement to build non-authoritarian societies. To us it appears that this movement consists to a considerable extent, of isolated groups and individuals who often do not know what others are doing. The resultant waste in effort in proposing and testing analyses, ideas, and methods of working -class education is something which may be disastrous in a world where the problems of society are demanding prompt solution.

The possibility of nuclear war with its vast overkill potential, world famine, destruction of our natural environment, impending economic collapse, and increasing authoritarianism are some of the problems that will be increasingly urgent until we establish a sane society. We address ourselves to those who agree that the bureaucratism and authoritarianism both of the capitalist societies and the so-called socialist or communist world must be replaced with a free association of producers and citizens.

But the question must be asked whether the movement for a non-authoritarian society is at all capable of coping with either the organization and zeal of the Leninist-Stalinist-Maoist approach or the fascist reaction growing out of capitalist society. History, as well as observation of the present relatively minimal impact of non-authoritarian thinking, unfortunately gives an answer that is not reassuring to those who seek the freedom of mankind.

But the LEAGUE FOR ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY feels that the anti-authoritarian movement can be more effective. We can learn from others. We can put our ideas to a test. We can lend each other aid. We can do all this and still maintain individual and group autonomy. But we need efficient communication. Thus we are launching SYNTHESIS as a newsletter to provide this communication among groups and individuals. Naturally we hope for cooperation. But we are not asking for any great commitment of time or money from anyone else. We do hope that each group or individual will keep us informed as to what you are doing, planning, and thinking.

We project for SYNTHESIS a different role than of the SRAF BULLETIN, the PHILADELPHIA SOLIDARITY NEWSLETTER, or the London SOLIDARITY publication for example. We hope to catalog a wider range of activity and thinking than do these publications. We further hope to provide a forum for well-thought-out discussion of the nature of future society and the movement that must be engendered to reach it. The League for Economic Democracy does not view SYNTHESIS as its own mouthpiece but rather as an organ of communication for the whole anti-authoritarian movement.

This first issue of SYNTHESIS contains discussion concerning the need for organization and the tactics of our movement. We hope this will continue. The next-to-the-last sheet of this issue of SYNTHESIS contains our original announcement and the fact sheet that was to be returned. If you haven't already sent it in, please do so, or please pass it along to others who might be interested and please keep us up to date on your activities. We would also appreciate addresses of others who might like to be represented in SYNTHESIS. Let us know any changes you want in the SYNTHESIS writeup of you or your group. Just following this is a sheet which we hope all readers will return for compiling issue #2 of SYNTHESIS.

There are three main parts of this issue of SYNTHESIS: geographical listing of groups sending us some information for inclusion in this issue, sources of information and publications of possible interest to correspondents of SYNTHESIS, and finally, communication and discussion.

GEOGRAPHICAL LISTING OF ORGANIZATIONS

CALIFORNIA

Berkeley

FOR OURSELVES, Council for Generalized Self-Management, P.O. Box 754, Berkeley, CA 94701. (Other addresses: P.O. Box 1503, Palo Alto, CA 94302 and P.O. Box 6461, San Francisco, CA 94101.)

"We want to abolish the system of wage and salaried labor, of commodity exchange-value and of profit, of corporate and bureaucratic power. We want to decide the nature and conditions of everything we do, to manage all social life collectively and democratically. We want to end the division of mental from manual work and of 'free' time from work time, by bringing into play all our abilities for enjoyable creative activity. We want the whole world to be our conscious self-creation, so that our days are full of wonder, learning, and pleasure. NOTHING LESS."

"It is in this spirit that we call upon you to organize, as we are doing, where you work and where you live, to begin planning the way we can run society together, to defend yourselves against the deepening misery that is being imposed on all of us. We call upon you to assault actively the lies, the self-deceptions born of fear,

that keep everyone frozen in place while the world is falling apart around us. We call upon you to link up with us and with others who are doing the same thing. Above all, we call upon you to take yourselves and your desires seriously, to realize your own power to master your own lives.

"It is now or never. If we are to have a future, we ourselves must be that future."

from a February 16, 1974 statement
of FOR OURSELVES

This group has published several pamphlets including: "The Minimum Definition of Intelligence--Theses on the Construction of One's Own Self-Theory," "The Right to be Greedy," "In Portugal"--a FOR OURSELVES Critique of an internationally distributed statement by several organizations including INTERNATIONALISM (USA).

INTERVENTION, P.O. Box 460, Main Post Office, Berkeley, CA 94701.

This group reports: "We are working on a generalized theoretical explanation of who we are, what we want, why, and how we propose to get it."

One of the members is working on an analysis of China which apparently will be published. A leaflet issued at "The March for Jobs" at Sacramento January 18, 1975 indicates somewhat the approach of INTERVENTION:

"...Wildcat strikes, sabotage, workplace occupations, and squatters' movements are occuring around the world as the international working class seeks the consciousness and means to make its action truly significant. We see ourselves as part of this movement and we wish to join with all of you in collectively seizing control of our lives and developing a society of generalized self-management.

"Here are some suggestions that we have:
1) Self-management of all aspects of society
2) The development of a truly liberating culture
3) Mutural Aid Associations/Neighborhood Self-Defense Leagues
4) The abolition of wage-slavery
5) Permanent rent strikes/ squatters' movements
6) Work-place occupations and takeovers."

See also excerpts from a letter to LED from INTERVENTION in this issue of SYNTHESIS.

Los Angeles

UPSHOT, P.O. Box 26135, Los Angeles, CA 90026.

"We are a tiny group here in L.A. and we wd.like to see attention given to practical struggles in this area as well as to national/international news. We hope to see more public efforts at total revolution and perhaps less intra-mural parlor talk."

UPSHOT has published several leaflets including one titled "Remarks on Failure" which sets forth some of the positions of this group. It rejects certain "important specifics of the situationist dogma."

"To begin, councilism merits an obvious rejection, both as a point of law and for its centralism and bureaucracy....The emphasis on violence we also find basically objectionable, and credit it...to either an adolescent fetishism or a veneration of Marx, or both....The most rigorous onslaught against hierarchy involves the deepest examination of the problem by each individual, not the suppression of individuals who have not yet reached radical conclusions."

Mountain View (Bay Area)

SRAFPRINT CO-OP, P.O. Box 4091, Mountain View, CA 94040.

Publishers of the SRAFEDERATION BULLETIN FOR ANARCHIST AGITATORS--Information and Correspondence organ of the SOCIAL-REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST FEDERATION. Current issue #39. SRAF has published a number of pamphlets and will send a list of literature and buttons.

Oakland

PARTISANS FOR A SOCIALIST RECONSTRUCTION
(Partisans for Socio-Industrial Democracy)
P.O. Box 24764, Oakland, CA 94623; (415)-428-2588.

"An association of Revolutionary socio-industrial unionists and scientific socialists."

Palo Alto

THE RE-INVENTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE
Box 282, Palo Alto, CA 94302.

"Attempt to be comprehendable to those with little intellectual background in revolutionary theory. Find a lot worthwhile in perspective of situationist theory. (Find a lot obnoxious in 'situationism'.) Tend to express subjective aspect of revolutionary sentiment in forms more easily approachable....Looking for concrete plans on feasible revolutionary reorganization of life.

"Published abridged, approachable version of Vaneigem's Treatise on Living. Was arrested for Palo Alto mayor's critique and supersession of daily alienation. (collaboration.) Published and cassette recorded songs including the corny C&W 'Driver that Stole Cargo.'

"Will publish new edition of FOR OURSELVES' Minimum Definition of Intelligence. More things with music. Perhaps critique of left, religious mysticism...."

Books and pamphlets published: "Abridged version Vaneigem Treatise: 15¢, Radical Subjectivity section of Treatise: 10¢, Song version of Treatise: 10¢, 'Mayor' letter: 10¢, Engels' introduction to Marx's

Paris Commune writings: 20¢, Sheet music 'Driver that Stole Cargo': 10¢, Song diversion of leftist 'Red Star Singers': 5¢, Cassette tape of over 20 pieces of music (inc. those mentioned, corny country arrang. of 'Driver', instrum...): $4.00."

Also have "List of materials available from several different groups (and their addresses) relating to basic inquiries into libertarian socialism and situationist theory: (10¢)."

San Pedro (Los Angeles)

LEAGUE FOR ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY, P.O. Box 1858, San Pedro, CA 90733.

LED believes that the libertarian council movement holds the best opportunity for sane, revolutionary change in today's world. As we see it, the council movement must work with industrial-community developments and must build within the spontaneity and organizing synthesis of society.

LED realizes that theory and beliefs alone will not be enough for revolutionary change. What are needed also are practical organizing forms. We try to work with all libertarian citizen-worker groups that are striving for change to non-authoritarian societies.

LED distributes, and in a limited way publishes, libertarian socialist literature. It has a neatly-mimeographed edition of THE WORKERS' OPPOSITION by Alexandra Kollontai that is sold at cost (75¢ each with a discount of 40% for bulk orders). COMMUNITY ECONOMIC WORKSHOPS, written and published by LED, presents a plan for beginning the social change to a non-authoritarian society now. It stresses that the latent industrial power possessed by the working class is the most important means for transforming society. The pamphlet outlines how citizens' and workers' councils would interact in future society to produce, plan, distribute, provide services, and grapple with problems. (10¢ for a single copy and 5¢ each in bulk orders.)

LED has weekly workshop meetings and carries on as much educational work as possible. A LED member who is an historian is preparing a pamphlet on the council movement in Germany following World War I. Hopefully, it will provide a needed source for information on a relatively unknown revolution.

San Francisco

MODERN TIMES BOOK STORE, 3800 - 17th St., San Francisco, CA 94114 (621-2675).

Collective. "...we are a distribution center for all shades (red and black) of left thought...."

Signal Hill (Long Beach)

CONCERNED CITIZENS COMMITTEE,
1840 Junipero Ave., #6, Signal Hill, CA 90806, (213) 434-0574.

"Work with all groups which are struggling for social change--radicals of various kinds (Anarchist, Libertarians, Democratic Socialist and Authoritarians if necessary). Anyone opposed to monopoly Capitalism and Imperialism."

C. T. Weber, who replied relative to this group, is "former state chairperson of Peace and Freedom Party of California--founder Long Beach Free Clinic--presently involved with People for Proportional Representation, American Friends Service Committee and Long Beach Area Citizens Involved. Also member of Advisory Committee to Joint Committee for revision of Election Code."

Group plans future work with "American Friends Service Committee--People for Proportional Representation--People's Action Union--War Resisters League--Coalition for Economic Survival--Peace and Freedom Party--Long Beach Area Citizens Involved."

ILLINOIS

Chicago

DEFENSE BOOK STORE, (312) 733-4911.
(Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in the U.S.S.R.
P.O. Box 8232, Chicago, IL 60680. (312) 733-4911.)

General principles and approach: "The general overthrow of the capitalist states and 'worker states', and the establishment of a self-managed society. The defense of all political prisoners and the disseminations of literature regarding the above mentioned."

Arranges "various forums in defense of political prisoners, specifically those in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe."

Has published: "BULLETIN of the Committee in Defense of political prisoners in the Soviet Union $1.00" as well as "Various leaflets and pamphlets on the plight of Political Prisoners in the Soviet Union."

Publish a very extensive and valuable literature catalog listing 235 titles of pamphlets and books on Russia, socialism, anarchism, labor, etc. Also list a number of socialist and anarchist newspapers.

LOUISIANA

New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS SOCIALIST UNION, P.O. Box 2647, New Orleans LA 70176. (504) 866-7726, 524-5382, 524-9465.

Anarcho-Communist approach. "Publishers of the LOUISIANA WORKER, a 'mass' newspaper (paid circulation 500+, total circulation upwards of 2,500). Appears roughly every six weeks, sometimes oftener. $4.00 for 12 issues (make check payable to Louisiana Worker)." Plans for future activities: "We'll try most anything that might pay off in higher proletarian consciousness (and ain't too much work)."

"We've been phasing out leaflets; people don't pay any attention to them....We'd like to see a national newspaper that attempted to reach both masses of working people and lefties with a perspective of building a new national anarcho-communist movement, something that would be for us what the GUARDIAN is for the Maoist jerks."

MASSACHUSETTS

So. Deerfield

SUNDAY NEWS COLLECTIVE, c/o Bartley Fisch,
245 Sugarloaf St., So. Deerfield, MA 01373.

"We are a recently formed media collective which spontaneously connected last August. Our one principle is work. The collective does an hour a week news show focusing on working class, prison, veterans, anti-imperialist news and local stories on the impact of theccapitalist depression on the local area's poor and minority peoples. Twice a month we have two hours on the radio for a show called "We the People". The show goes into greater detail on specific stories than our news hour. We've done features on Martin Sostre, Angela Davis, children's books, political prisoners and capitalism, Chilean exiles in America. More are in the offing including a tape on the San Francisco General Strike and oral labor history readings."

"All of the folks involved had very active political/social pasts in different community counseling, teaching, organizing, drug rehabilitation programs. Several are active now in these same capacities and bring these experiences to the collective as news."

Plans include: "expand collective base, make more tapes, show films, travel with some of collective to do a study on local organizing projects." "A pamphlet of radical media resources will be coming out in the near future."

MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor

BENI (Beni Memorial Library), 1433 University Terr., 735,
Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

"Anarchist, anarcho-communist, communist egoist, libertarian communist, believer in self-management activities....I correspond, write letters, engage in prisoner aid activities, send money, read, do occasional graphics for publications, and distribute publications--anarchist, libertarian socialist, etc.--leaflets, posters, pamphlets, periodicals, etc., to various groups and individuals."

Books, pamphlets, leaflets: "I try to maintain two collections locally, mostly through purchase and exchange with others, and to send duplicates (or to xerox duplicates where I can't get enough originals) to others--either in exchange for stuff they've picked up, or at cost, or for free if need be. I do this worldwide." Has a leaflet on collecting used postage stamps for prisoners.

Detroit

BLACK AND RED, Box 9546, Detroit, MI 48202.

Printers and publishers of Situationist, Anarchist and Solidarity literature. Beautiful printing of basic works at very reasonable prices. Prompt, reliable handling of orders. Some titles: P. Arshinov, HISTORY OF THE MAKHONOVIST MOVEMENT (1918-1921) $2.50; Voline, THE UNKNOWN REVOLUTION $4.00; Brinton, THE BOLSHEVIKS AND WORKERS' CONTROL $.80; Gregoire and Perlman, WORKER-STUDENT ACTION COMMITTEES: FRANCE, MAY, 1968 $1.00. A complete list will be sent upon request.

Oak Park (Detroit area)

ROBERT C. BLACK AND FRIENDS, 24720 Kipling, Oak Park, MI 48237.

"Libertarian, socialist (close to guild socialism), decentralist, participatory democrat--critically receptive to the approaches of Ivan Illich, the early G.D.H. Cole, LED and Solidarity groups, Paul Goodman, the creative remnant of anarchist thought (Bookchin, Baldelli), etc.

"Personally, my political work has been toward youth liberation (in high school) and democratic student-faculty governance (in college), freedom in education, some local radical politics and anti-imperialist activity; my friends have also worked in tenant organizing, feminism, etc. (all this in Ann Arbor and/or at the University of Michigan."

Plans for future activities: "More of the same--presently rethinking our political principles (hence our interest in your publication): my friends don't yet explicitly relate their general radical political work, as I more or less do, to a distinct approach and goals."

"We've written transient topical articles in campus newspapers, etc.--nothing of general interest. I've written an unpublished guide to libertarian socialist thought (past and present) which might form the basis of a publication someday." "...for $1.00 Xerox costs I'd send the aforementioned guide if anyone is interested, but it's not intended for circulation."

Concerning SYNTHESIS: "Personally, I'd like to see these approaches: (1) topical--e.g. direct, concrete attention to questions like wages, coercion of aggressors, how non-local economic bodies are to be constituted and controlled, etc.; (2) historical--exhuming and assessing kindred past developments--guild socialism, Spanish Revolutionary practice, Kropotkin, De Leon--without either snobbery or romanticism."

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque

LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST LEAGUE, P.O. Box 25,331, Albuquerque, NM 87125.

Its study group meets every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at 815 Girard, NE in Albuquerque.

"We have business meetings once a month. After the business is finished we have political discussions, and outside speakers when possible. Our meetings are open to anyone. At our last business meeting we had a speaker and a discussion of recent events in Spain and Portugal. A former UNM student who recently returned from the two countries was present to help in the discussion.

At the present time we do not have a mailing address and are hard to get in touch with. This will change in the near future. We are in the process of getting a post office box that will be our permanent address. For now, if you want to get in touch just call one of our members or come to the regular Tuesday night study group."

"We plan on publishing a mimeographed newspaper beginning sometime this summer. We intend to have news and analysis from a democratic socialist viewpoint, articles on labor and socialist history and theory, and more. It all depends on what people write and submit for the paper. If you would like to write or help in some other way let us know. We invite everyone who wants to participate.

"Our study group has been meeting for about a month now. We are reading some basic socialist writings, as well as discussing current events, and anything else that comes up. We want to make our study of theory and history relevant to our effort to build a better world."

(See also the letter from CE in the discussion section.)

NEW YORK

Buffalo

BUFFALO BLACK ROSE, Box 831, Ellicott Station, Buffalo, NY 14205.

"Libertarian communist with councilist and situationist leaning. At the present we are drawing up our general principles."

Past and current activities include Attica support, Martin Sostre defense, literature tables, discussion groups, work in food co-ops, Neighborhood Self-Reliance, communal bakery, critique of Boston working committee meeting.

Plans for future activities are: local newsletter, anarchist center, forums, films. Distribute books and pamphlets from Black and Red, New Space Books, Philadelphia Solidarity, Free Life Editions, Black Rose Books (Montreal). Have published a simply-written "Proposal for

Workers' Councils" titled "Who Needs THEM?" and a critique of the October 26-27, 1974 conference titled "Working Committee for a Continental Anarchist Congress" (Boston Working Committee). (A letter from Richard Sprout apparently published in a Buffalo area newspaper and which shows one of their activities is reprinted in this issue of SYNTHESIS under Communications and Discussion as well as some excerpts from a letter to LED.

Ithaca

C. GEORGE BENELLO, 29 Renwick Hgths. Rd., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

Principles and approach: Believe in workers' and community control, decentralization, non-authoritarian and participating social forms.

Past and current activities: Director of New City Project, Cambridge Institute, Cambridge, MA; President Parallel Institute, Montreal (helped set up worker-controlled factory). Now engaged in organizing Funding and Educational Development Organization, FEDO, a non-profit development corporation to fund and train for workers' controlled enterprises.

Publications: Article on FEDO in May, 1975 issue of PEOPLE FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER, article in AUTOGESTION, also in volume at Self-Management Conference. "Prospects for Workers' Control in the United States." Co-editor of THE CASE FOR PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. (Viking)

OHIO

Cleveland (Kent)

CLIFF BERNS, 14404 Washington Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44118. (Also Box 45 Stopher Hall, Kent, OH 44243.)

"Revolutionary socialist. I am a student at Kent State University, interested in student work and teach-ins on the economy." "Participated in the left-Trotskyist movement since 1970. Current member-at-large of the New American Movement." "Involved in discussion/study group in Kent; would like to become involved in setting up workshops, forums, on a socialist view of the economic crisis."

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA SOLIDARITY, GPO Box 13011, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

"P.S. is dedicated to human emancipation through working-class education, activity, self-organization, and solidarity. Integrated workers and community councils can supercede bureaucracies, bosses and leaders. Production in goods and services is to fulfill social and individual needs."

Activities: "Putting out SOLIDARITY NEWSLETTER on an irregular basis; filling literature orders; correspondence with interested persons; sponsoring of public talks/discussions on left libertarianism; contacts with groups in Philadelphia and area; cooperation with workplace organizing attempts....Hope to sponsor Stanley Monowitz in fall of '75."

Philadelphia Solidarity is one of the main outlets for London Solidarity literature in the U.S. Its literature catalog lists Solidarity literature and that of other groups as well as its own. Some of the categories listed are: "Revolutionary Theory", "The Russian Experience", "Other Historical Lessons", "The Industrial Struggle." Solidarity authors include Brinton, Cardan, Potter, Anderson.

Philadelphia

RECON, P.O. Box 14602, Philadelphia, PA 19134.

RECON is a monthly newsletter containing information about the U.S. military machine, columns on strategy and tactics and articles on military developments in other parts of the world. $3 per year for movement cadre and GIs. $10 per year for institutions and sustainers. 25¢ for a single copy.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

MOTHER EARTH BOOKS, Box 30097 Wallingford Stn., Seattle, WN 98103.

"Mother Earth Books is a voluntary project, now in its fourth year." "Every phase of our work is done by individuals who believe sharing and sharing libertarian literature is important....All donations and all proceeds from the sale of literature go into maintaining and expanding the literature we offer, and towards day to day operating expenses." Mother Earth Books publishes an attractive and very complete catalog of books in the fields of anarchism, syndicalism, situationist movement, left communism, labor, economics, women's movement, history, prisons, psychology.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMMUNITY BOOKSHOP, 2325 - 18th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009

Anti-profit, workers' collective, non-sectarian, comprehensive support for liberation struggles, responsive to community needs. Sponsor or support women's festivals, Gay-Pride Week, Palestinian Childrens Art Show, Organizer's Book Center, non-profit Art Supply Collective, Latin cultural events. Plan "Increased involvement in Adams-Morgan community struggles, continued support for feminist, gay, children's, workers', Third-World struggles." Have a large selection of literature and will handle mail orders but have not published a catalog.

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL SELF-RELIANCE
1717 - 18th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 232-4108

"The Institute is a non-profit, educational and research organization formed to counter tendencies in this country toward over-centralization, over-bureaucratization and large-scale production systems isolated from the consumer. Our purposes are to begin redefining our urban neighborhoods and our cities as increasingly self-reliant, productive systems; to teach people the tools of self-reliance; and to investigate the legal powers for municipal decentralization. We are incorporated in the District of Columbia and have been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service.

"The Institute staff works on a number of mutually supporting levels. We are investigating the potential of a variety of economic and technological alternatives for urban self-reliance. We are producing a series of simply written pamphlets on different aspects of urban decentralization. We are developing and testing models of various small-scale, ecologially rational production and service systems. We provide technical assistance to communities, cities and organizations concerned with issues of local initiative and independence. We maintain an information service on questions of urban development, economic alternatives, local production systems and appropriate technology. And soon we will be publishing SELF-RELIANCE, a monthly newsletter covering research and achievement, throughout the country, in technology, economics and politics pertinent to self-reliant urban communities."

Some projects of the Institute staff are currently: "Urban Food Systems", "Energy Generation and Use" (Solar vs. Nuclear Energy), "Neighborhood Economics", "'Waste' Utilization". "Institute members serve as resource staff for students enrolled in Communitas, an upper level college program in the University Without Walls unit of Roger Williams College, Providence, R.I." A publications list is available. The Institute's staff and consultants include a number of authors and specialists relevant to the work being done. Karl Hess, author of "Dear America" is one of its consultants. See elsewhere in this issue of SYNTHESIS for a few quotes from this important book.

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee

MIL-SRAF, Box 90159, Milwaukee, WI 53202

Anarchist group engaged in high school and university organizing. Connected with SRAF's BLACK STAR. Now working with meat cutters and greenhouse workers. Have published a number of leaflets "but mostly worthless outside of their original usage."

Relative to SYNTHESIS, "Leave it open with no censorship."

CANADA

Ottowa

ALAN WHITEHORN, Dept. of Political Science, Carleton University, Ottowa, Canada.

Guild socialism, syndicalist. "Conducted survey in Yugoslavia on participation, alienation, and democracy." Plans a "book on workers' self-management."

Publications: "Alienation and Workers' Self-Management", CANADIAN SLAVONIC PAPERS #2, 1974. "Workers' Self-Management: Socialist Myth or Prognostication" APSA meeting.

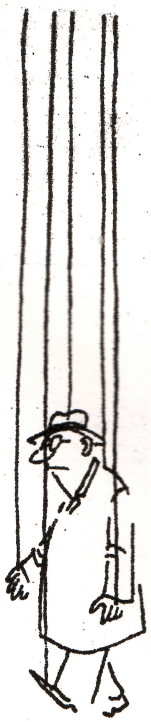
Concerning the newsletter: "The title of your group is an appropriate title but how about some names of people who are contributing? How about a decent monthly or journal given the number of groups and people involved."

* *

"In Lenin's overanxious desire to establish the guardianship of an omniscient and omnipotent Central Committee...we recognize the symptoms of the same subjectivism that has already played more than one trick on Socialist thinking in Russia....

"Knocked to the ground, almost reduced to dust, by Russian absolutism, the 'ego' takes revenge by turning to revolutionary activity. In the shape of a committee of conspirators, in the name of a nonexistent Will of the People, it seats itself on a kind of throne and proclaims it is all-powerful. But the 'object' proves to be the stronger. The knout is triumphant, for tsarist might seems to be the 'legitamate' expression of history."

(Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Question of Social Democracy" (1904) in ROSA LUXEMBURG SPEAKS edited by Mary Alice Waters, N.Y. 1970.)



S O U R C E S

(Listed alphabetically according to name, not locality.)

BLACK ROSE BOOKS, 3934 rue St. Urbain, Montreal 131, Quebec, Canada.

OUR GENERATION has the same address.

On request Black Rose Books will send an extensive and attractive catalog of works it publishes and also of other publishers. Often titles are available in either paperback or hardcover.

Besides the books Black Rose publishes itself it has available books from Black and Red, Free Life Editions, London Solidarity as well as regular commercial publishers. Although discounts between 20% and 50% are allowed for large orders, in the interests of economy individuals and groups may want to compare prices obtainable from the primary publishers when possible.

Titles cover a wide range of subjects in the fields of anarchy, libertarian socialism, participatory democracy, etc.

OUR GENERATION is a carefully-printed quarterly described as "an independent radical journal." The subscription rate is $5.00 for four issues. "...the journal attempts from a libertarian socialist perspective to be of service to people who want to persue the relationship of social questions, and this from a thorough theoretical and practical vantage point. OUR GENERATION seeks to encourage research and social analysis in the areas of critical social theory, the development of the respective social and national liberation movements in Quebec and Canada, and a radical analysis of industrial societies in general."

CALIFORNIA SOCIALIST, Room 213, 3950 W. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90020.

Newsletter format of the Socialist Party and Peace and Freedom activity in California. Have an attractive edition of Bellamy's "Parable of the Water Tank." Five for 25¢ plus 10¢ postage.

EMERGING POPULATION ALTERNATIVES (EMPA), 41 Union Square, Room 1327, New York, NY 10003. (See p. 21 for details.)

FREE LIFE EDITIONS, 41 Union Sq. West, New York, NY 10003.

The current catalog states: "FREE LIFE EDITIONS is a new publisher of books on subjects relating to person, social, and political freedom."

"Our first series of books is described in this catalog. Forthcoming books include Franz Oppenheimer's classic, THE STATE; LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION by Joel Spring; Raoul Vaneigem's TREATISE ON LIVING FOR THE USE OF THE YOUNG GENERATION; and Murray Bookchin's history of Spanish Anarchism."

Books listed in the catalog are: THE ANARCHIST COLLECTIVES, Sam Dolgoff, editor ($3.45); OUR ENEMY--THE STATE by Albert Jay Nock ($2.45); AS WE GO MARCHING, John T. Flynn ($3.45); THE UNKNOWN REVOLUTION, Voline ($5.95); THE EGO AND HIS OWN, Max Stirner ($5.00). Prices are for paperbacks except the last. Forty percent discount is allowed for five or more books.

GREAT ATLANTIC RADIO CONSPIRACY,
2743 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218, (301) 243-6987.

Supply tapes to radio stations, libraries and individuals. Subjects have a wide range with some stress on a feminist perspective. Some subjects listed in series 8 and 9 of the tapes are: Women in China, food additives, anarcho-feminism,, tax money used to encourage life-supporting groups, struggle of the UFW, Rounder Records Collective, Martin Sostre, workers' control in the plywood industry, racism in Cuba, some overseas operations of the CIA, abortion, etc. Prices to individuals are $5.00 each for open reels copies and $3.50 for cassette copies. Discount for two or more copies.

INDUSTRIAL WORKER -- Official Organ of the Industrial Workers of the World, 752 West Webster, Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 549-5045.

Monthly. $2.50 per year.

INTERNATIONALISM, P.O. Box 961, Manhattanville Station,
365 W. 125th St., New York, NY 10027.

Publishers of INTERNATIONALISM. Current issue #6 contains the following articles: "State Capitalism", "Economic Crisis and Its Implications", "Working Class Movement in Spain", "Scottish Strike Wave" and "Fascism and Anti-Fascism." Perhaps typical of this group is the article on"State Capitalism" which is based on traditional Marxist principles and is critical of Cardan's approach. Cooperates with "Revolution Internationale" (France) and "World Revolution" (Great Britain).

Subscription to INTERNATIONALISM is $2.25 for 3 issues. Receive subscriptions for WORLD REVOLUTION (also $2.25 for 3 issues).

CHARLES H. KERR PUBLISHING CO.
431 S. Dearborn, Suite 829, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 922-5120.
(Kerr also has a P.O. Box 914 in Chicago (60690).

Kerr, established in 1886, is a source for some of the early socialist and labor publications. Titles by Marx, Engels, Darrow, Lafargue, Keracher, Debs, etc., are available, often in inexpensive editions. On request Kerr will place names on its mailing list to be informed of future publications. Some of the Kerr plans include:

"We would like to publish some wonderful PhD dissertations in the field of labor history, to help correct the anti-labor bias of so much of the education workers receive.

"Kerr wants to issue new books, pamphlets, brochures that reflect the contemporary situation from a working-class point of view. We want to put into the hands of the active unionist and shop steward materials that will help them carry out their specific functions and at the same time serve as leaders and educators of workers in the shop. We also want to issue analysis of the economic and political system nationally and internationally so that workers may more clearly interpret the significance of events in their terms.

"Frankly, these projects are all in the planning stage. Kerr's work can only succeed with the help of every segment of labor. Kerr thinks of itself as the publisher to the working-class--the whole class--all segments of it."

LAIZZES FAIRE BOOKS, 208 A Mercer St., New York, NY 10012.

Publishes an extensive catalog of libertarian and anarchist literature which will be sent upon request.

THE MATCH -- An International Anarchist Journal. Published monthly. P.O. Box 3488, Tucson, AZ 85722.

Carefully written paper from anarchist view-point. Has a "Free Ads Column" for"deserving notices." THE MATCH handles classical anarchist literature and also a pamphlet that should be of interest to movement printers, described as follows: "A new and very helpful pamphlet on offset printing has just been completed by our friends at Western World Press. Titled OFFSET, it is a guide to graphics, printing, and binding. Includes details of press operation, as explained by Robert Sagehorn, and an article, TYPOGRAPHICAL MACHINERY FOR THE SMALL SHOP, by Fred Woodworth." Price 50¢. THE MATCH will also compose copy into photographable type-images for offset reproduction at other printers and has a free brochure listing type-styles and rates. They do not do job printing however.

MOUNTAIN MOVERS, P.O. Box 10405, 454 Willamette St., Eugene, OR 94701.

"We are a small socialist feminist newsstand just starting."

NEW DIMENSIONS, P.O. Box 11106, San Francisco, CA 94101.

"...magazine to begin publishing late this year. It will be a widely-circulated magazine of the left, presenting a range of ideas about social and political change. Included in the magazine will be a section with news of the previous month. We will be getting many publications from around the world and will also have stringers around the country sending us news.

"Could you please send us any information you have on your group, and put us on your regular mailing list for any releases you send out? We'd like to be in touch with what you're doing."

THE NEW SOCIALIST, Box 18026, Denver, CO 80218.

Discussion journal of Socialist Party. No. 11 of Vol. 1, May, 1975 consisted of ten pages and included articles titled: "Some Reflections on the Need for Libertarian Socialism", "Inflation, Recession and Stagflation", and "100 Years of the 'Critique of the Gotha Program.'"

NEW SPACE BOOKS, 1509 N. Halsted, 1F, Chicago, IL 60622.

Successors to Solidarity Bookshop, formerly of 713 Armitage Ave., Chicago.

"The satisfactions of working and cavorting at 713 became increasingly deadened by its cramped space and the even more cramping need to sell books, keep accounts, hassle with publishers, etc.--all merely to pay the rent and restock."

"Following our instincts rather than any predetermined model, we decided to rent an industrial space (approximately 4,000 square feet). From that base we would still distribute books, but they would mostly be our own or friends' work rather than the encyclopedically anarchist Solidarity stock."

"So far most of our projected activity has to do with publications--printing and silkscreening. We've already started to collect the presses, cameras, and other printing equipment."

"Enclosed is the first whole catalog of New Space Books. Don't be too surprised if it looks a lot like a Solidarity close out sale. We need money badly and would like to streamline our stocks."

NEW UNIONISTS' NEWSLETTER, P.O. Box 24155, Minneapolic, MN 55424. (For information call 377-8447 or 331-4462.)

Distributed by the New Unionists, "a voluntary organization of rank and file workers." The May '75 issue of this four-page newsletter was #7. The general approach of this group is that of building towards socialist industrial unionism by seeking to organize now on those lines. In the opinion of LED, The New Unionists are willing to experiment and are open to new ideas and approaches. In the past this group has produced a number of good leaflets some of which LED reprinted and circulated. The newsletter has an "Open Forum" section in which "workers speak out on their jobs, their problems, and society."

PEOPLE FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT, P.O. Box 802, Ithaca, NY 14850.

This group publishes the NEWSLETTER; the March-February issue was #11 and was concerned to a great extent with an exchange between Augustus F. Hawkins, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Equal Opportunities, and Professor Jaroslav Vanek, Program on Worker-Management, of the Dept. of Economics of Cornell University. Under consideration is The Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Act of 1976. This bill would guarantee "useful and rewarding employment"

"to all adult Americans able and willing to work." Professor Vanek advocates "the management and exploitation of the place of work by all those without exception who work together in it, with capital retaining the right to equitable remuneration but no right of control."

The Newsletter announced publications by OUR GENERATION and BLACK ROSE of Canada, (listed under Canada) and that "One of the leading Yugoslav journals, Ekonomska Analiza, plans to expand into an international journal entitled ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND WORKERS' MANAGEMENT." (In U.S. write Peter Miovic, 235 Park Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081. The Yugoslav address is Ekonomski Biro, Marsala Tita 4/VI, 11000 Beograd, Yugoslavia.)

People for Self-Management were to hold a Second Internation Conference on Selfmanagement, June 6-8, 1975 at Ithaca, N.Y.

PEOPLE'S BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION,
1346 Connecticut Ave., YW, Washington, DC 20036.

"A nationwide citizen organization dedicated to restoring the democratic principles that shaped the birth of this republic."

Publish COMMON SENSE. Has wide-ranging activities, some of which are indicated by the following:

"Thousands of libraries, churches, fraternal clubs, schools, civic associations, etc., are currently using materials and programs specially developed by the PBC."

"The PBC radio series, THE VOICES OF '76, is being aired on a daily basis by 924 radio stations across the U.S.

"The PBC television series, THE VOICES OF '76, is being aired, on an ongoing basis by 102 T.V. stations in major metropolitan areas throughout the country.

"PBC is publishing 9 commercial books in 1974-75 with Bantam, Simon & Schuster, McGraw-Hill, etc., for distribution through mass market (drugstores), bookstores, school markets, etc. These books range from scholarly studies of the American Revolution to the issue of concentration of economic power in contemporary America."

The Peoples' Bicentennial Commission is a remarkable organization and it has had amazing success. With great insight it began plans for the inevitable bicentennial celebration of the American Revolution several years ago and thus got the jump on those who will use this event to stir up blind, patriotic fervor. Instead, the PBC draws the important parallel that economic tyranny can and should be replaced by economic democracy just as monarchial rule was replaced by political democracy in the American Revolution. Its publications offer a refreshing and sound approach to the revolutionary movement in the U.S., and the world for that matter, that has so long been preoccupied with the aborted Russian Revolution. We feel that the two PBC pocket books we have reviewed should be on the literature list of every libertarian organization and eventually on the book shelf of

every freedom-loving, English-speaking person. These books are attractively printed, simply written, and inexpensive, but carry a powerful message authenticated by history. VOICES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (Bantam Book, $1.75), in a brief history of the American Revolution shows the role of rank and file citizens in prompting greater boldness on the part of their more articulate countrypeople. The larger section of the book contains quotations that illuminate the sound thinking of 200 years ago relative to basic freedom. COMMON SENSE II: THE CASE AGAINST CORPORATE TYRANNY (Bantam Book, $1.25) does indeed do what its cover claims: "Shatters the myths that giant corporations use to rule our lives." "It points the way to a democratic society." Just one quote from the chapter "The Best-Kept Secret in America" will illustrate this:

"Management's frenzied paranoia over the success of their own corporate experiments in economic democracy is, perhaps, best illustrated in the case of the Polaroid Corporation. In the 1960s, Polaroid introduced a limited program of workers' control in one of its plants. Despite the fact that efficiency and productivity of plant operators soared beyond all expectations, Polaroid eventually abandoned the project. Why? According to Polaroid's training director, Ray Ferris, 'It was too successful. What were we going to do with the supervisors--the managers? We didn't need them anymore. Management decided it just didn't want operators that qualified.'"

Another couple of quotes from COMMON SENSE II too good to keep:

"The only way to insure that economic power is truly exercised by the people is to insure that it originates directly from the people. The basic goal of a democratic economy should be a nation of decentralized economic enterprises, with ownership and control being shared jointly by the workers in the plants and by the local communities in which they operate--with similar patterns of shared representative control being exercised on a regional and national level, to insure the smooth and efficient coordination of all economic operations."

"This loss of confidence in management decision-making is best illustrated by the experience of one corporate president who, despite a marked falloff in production under his supervision, repeatedly refused to accept recommendations from his employees. Anxious to rectify the situation, the executive summoned his employees together and issued an ultimatum: 'Whatever bottlenecks exist,' he said, 'I demand that you get rid of them. Any comments?' 'Sir,' said a rather thoughtful worker, 'in my experience with bottles, I've observed that the necks are always at the top.'"

RADICAL AMERICA, Box B, N. Cambridge, MA 02140.

"A bi-monthly magazine published by independent socialists, featuring in-depth articles on the history and politics of working-class militancy, community organizing, black and women's liberation, popular culture & class struggle in western Europe and the Americas."

Subscriptions are $5 for one year, $9 for two years, and $12 for three years.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY, 914 Industrial Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94304. (Publishes under the name New York Labor News.) Publishers of the WEEKLY PEOPLE. LED has considerable knowledge of the Socialist Labor Party and would class it as basically authoritarian in its function as a political party. It is, moreover, hostile to all other organizations and individuals that have differences of opinion. However, it does place stress on industrial democracy which it describes as "Socialist Industrial Unionism." This idea is traced to the "genius" of Daniel De Leon, one of the foremost American socialists in the period 1890-1914. De Leon made no claims of originality, and a careful analysis of the progression in his thinking and writing shows he was greatly influenced by the syndicalism of Europe and the American Western Federation of Miners. However, in the opinion of LED, the basic De Leon pamphlets (originally lectures) are well worthwhile: "Reform or Revolution", "What Means This Strike", "Two Pages from Roman History", "The Burning Question of Trades Unionism" and "Socialist Reconstruction of Society." The last was a lecture he gave in Minneapolis just following the founding convention of the IWW in which he was very influential. The pamphlets are obtainable from the Socialist Labor Party. They will send a catalog which, besides the works of De Leon, lists some of the basic pamphlets of Marx and Engels.

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, publication of the League for Socialist Reconstruction, P.O. Box 825, New York, NY 10010. ($3.00 six issues.)

Also can supply a number of pamphlets by De Leon, Marx, Engels. The summer '75 issue of THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC is an attractively illustrated 36-page magazine listed as Vol. 2, No. 2. Some of the articles are: "Evolution toward Revolution," "Inflation and Deflation of labor," "The Coal Strike and the United Mine Workers," "Socialism for a Scientist" and "Letters from a Socialist Abroad." The journal probably can best be described as De Leonist with an approach similar to that of the Socialist Labor Party.

SOLIDARITY (London), c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E.6, England.

SOLIDARITY has an extensive literature that has been reprinted in a number of countries and languages around the world. Its literature consists of works written by SOLIDARITY authors as well as translations of writers such as Paul Cardan. Its basic philosophy is probably best presented in "As We Don't See It." PHILADELPHIA SOLIDARITY is one of the main suppliers of SOLIDARITY literature in the U.S.

SOLIDARITY accepts subscriptions for its mimeographed journal "Solidarity" and pamphlets as produced. A subscription previously cost one pound but we were informed last fall that "we advise subscribers that the new postal rates mean that we can't send them as much for one pound as was previously possible. Postage on a single issue of SOLIDARITY for instance (3½p) is now equivalent to 70% of the cost of the material sent. We would be greatly helped if subscribers sent us a bit more than one pound (two pounds, if possible) when renewing their subs. We undertake to send them further issues of the paper and pamphlets to the value of whatever they sent us."

WORK FORCE, published bimonthly by Vocations for Social Change, 5951 Canning St., Oakland, CA 94609, (415) 653-6535.

The June 1975 issue, #46, was a 46-page Resource Guide listing groups active in the fields of anti-war organizing, community organizing, ecology, economic alternatives, education, elderly, gay liberation, GI's and veterans, health, housing, intentional communities, labor, law, media, media distributors, men's role liberation, mental prisoners' liberation, native people, prison, radicals in the system, research, revolutionary culture, third world, women, and youth. This guide is published twice a year and is $1.00 if ordered separately. Next guide issue is planned for the November/December issue. The September/October issue will be centered about unemployment and the January/February issue will be "Teachers in Struggle." Supported by donations, $7.00 per year requested.

EMERGING POPULATION ALTERNATIVES (EMPA), continued:

"EMPA is an international network of individuals and groups seeking to promote alternative, non-Malthusian approaches to understanding and action on population and 'family planning'. It grew out of a shared dissatisfaction with prevailing theories and programs, and a need for some means of exchanging information and ideas, and coordinating research and action, on a continuing basis. The network covers North America, most European countries and many parts of the Third World."

"At present we have two annotated bibliographies, some 'fact sheets' (produced for the World Population Conference) and a variety of articles, pamphlets and reprints. So far the reading lists have been mainly English language materials and on general topics."

"...we hope to become a source of ideas and analysis of population and birth control in a wider context. We shall be investigating two areas in particular where we feel there is an urgent need for better understanding and analysis--reproduction, birth control and the role of women and population, imperialism and Third World development. We would like to hear from people, especially women, working in or interested in either of these areas with a view to forming study groups."

COMMUNICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

We welcome material for this section concerning the nature of a sane future society and the means, tactics and organization necessary for building it. We do not plan to censor. We hope, however, that items submitted will avoid personal recriminations among the readers of SYNTHESIS and will concisely advance the discussion that has gone on previously.

The brutal economics of the cost of paper, ink and postage, to say nothing of the limits of our labor time which will be donated, will possibly limit how much we can publish. If for these reasons we shorten a communication, we will try nonetheless to preserve its pith. While we have included in this issue certain of our comments relative to one of the letters we have published, we do so in the spirit of initiating sound social discussion and not with the intent of making converts. We in League for Economic Democracy freely admit that we do not expect to reach a point where we can't learn from others. We hope that we can be open to changing our minds when evidence and reason so indicate.

We are striving for a sound but friendly interchange of ideas with a minimum of polemics, involvement of personalities, and acrimony. As much as possible we hope to step aside from the discussion, and serve as a medium for transmittal of vital information throughout the non-authoritarian movement.

Following are a few paragraphs from a long letter received from a member of INTERVENTION. The quoted portions by no means make clear all the points raised but hopefully do indicate some of the areas where a fruitful exchange of views can take place. We hope that SYNTHESIS will aid such an exchange.

"Obviously, some form of communication among non-authoritarian socialist groups is essential if we are to overcome the isolation and have an impact on society. But as you might have anticipated, your literature has prompted questions, suggestions and criticisms that we feel need further discussion before we are willing to commit ourselves to the project. I hope that you will view these as part of a dialogue in which we can all learn from each other and for that reason I am eagerly awaiting your response.

"The first thought that came to me as I read your literature was your emphasis on economic oppression. Nowhere do you mention the social, cultural and sexual oppression we face every day and how that is to be dealt with in building a new society. I know many people believe that once the economic relationships are democratized that all other social problems will be solved. But I do not see this as a cause and effect relationship, but rather as a dialectical one in which these phenomena interact upon each other."

"By what you have mentioned in the Community Economic Workshops pamphlets it seems that discussions, plans for improving workplace conditions, newsletters and economic deprivations automatically lead

to people organizing themselves and realizing their class solidarity. This again seems very economically deterministic without even considering the social and cultural reasons why this has never happened before in American society. In Stanley Aronowitz's book FALSE PROMISES he explores the social and historical reasons why the American working class has never organized itself into a self-consciously revolutionary proletariat even though the objective conditions for such a movement have presented themselves a number of times. It's worth reading and understanding so that we don't reproduce the same mistakes again (special emphasis on Chapter 2, 'Trivialized Work, Colonized Leisure')."

From BUFFALO BLACK ROSE, May 7, 1975:

"Living as close to Canada as we do we've had a chance to speak with Canadian Anarcho and Libertarian Communists who are quite upset with and will have nothing to do with many American 'anarchists' because of our 'patronizing' manners. Canadian problems of daily life are in many ways different than U.S.'s and a healthy respect for Canadian independence in actions and association is a must for us. Though we don't subscribe to SRAF we've seen many issues and have noticed a raging debate concerning the relationship to women in SRAF. We agree 100% with your position on terrorism and conspiratorial methods--another reason we reject SRAF's open policy in its newsletter where we've read many 'questionable' letters relating to terrorism and the use of force. We are calling our newsletter (which we'll send when it comes out) 'The Great Clearing' from the Utopian Socialist novel NEWS FROM NOWHERE by William Morris--a real gem. Off the top of our heads no name comes to mind but we'd like to steer clear of the macho violent names like Gun Blast, Bloody Spear, Death Cry, Bomb Blast or Cold Steel, etc. (only the last name is from a real title--but I'm sure you're all familiar with the type I mean)."

From Libertarian Socialist League:

"P.O. Box 25,331
Albuquerque, NM 87125

"Dear Folks,

"Recently I wrote to Philadelphia Solidarity concerning my feeling that there is a need for a national libertarian socialist membership organization. I have not been in touch with many people around the country so I am trying to contact other people and attempt to begin some discussion in that direction. I do know that there is very little agreement as to what exactly libertarian socialism really is, and to the nature of such an organization.

"I am a member of a small group in Albuquerque called the Libertarian Socialist League. It appears that most of us here would be politically close to you all in the League for Economic Democracy. We are not, however, very well organized and have yet to develop close political and working relationships. We don't have a mailing address yet. I will let you know when we get one. We have sponsored three

talks/forums, distributed several leaflets on our vision of socialism, and have held a few discussion meetings. We also distribute some literature, including your printing of Workers Opposition by Kollontai. We are planning on a libertarian socialist and labor history study group as well as co-sponsoring events with other groups. This includes a Rally and Picnic for May Day, and work with the local Gallo Boycott Committee in support of the farm workers. Since we are not very well organized I am only writing as an individual.

"The Philadelphia people told me you all were interested in beginning a communication newsletter nationwide. I am interested in this and would like to know more about your conception about this. You seem to come out of a De Leonist tradition, which I sure don't.

"I very strongly feel there is a need for a national libertarian organization and am glad to hear of your efforts in this direction. There seem to be others moving in this direction as well. One group I know of is the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation. I recently received a copy of their Declaration. Are you aware of these people? What do you think of their declaration? Personally, I do not agree with their declaration, or what I have read in their recent newsletter, and would never join such a group.

"The SRAF declaration establishes an organization without 'leaders' or 'centralism', or 'majority rule.' While trying to create a democratic organization they would accomplish the opposite. While being decentralized they are also undemocratic. Without the elective principle, without being able to elect and recall our leaders, we would have no control over them. There would be leaders under the SRAF proposal, but they would be self-appointed. The most vocal, the most aggressive, the most intellectual, those with the most free time, the most money, who owned the mimeo or press, those who were most macho, would become leaders, self-appointed leaders, and the rank and file would have no control over them.

"It seems to me that the appointive principle, or the self-appointive, is opposed to the elective principle. A decentralized organization without the elective principle seems as undemocratic as the bureaucratic centralism of leninism, authoritarianism, etc. In its place we need a flexible organization based on the election and recall of any leaders that may be needed.

A centralized organization based on election and recall from the bottom up is nothing to fear. I certainly feel that there are many problems involved in such a national organization at this time, but there are more problems in not doing it. The Stalinists-Maoists, the authoritarian and state capitalist left, have the stage almost all alone. We need to establish a libertarian socialist alternative to state centralism. It seems those people that might agree theoretically with a libertarian socialist program oppose an effective organization, have no class analysis of modern capitalism as an international system, and have no working class perspective to their efforts; while those who might take a working class orientation in their work are all Stalinist-Maoists, busily building the new state capitalist system in embryo in their bureaucratic and centralized

organizations. To offer an alternative of our own to all the old crap we need an effective national organization based on our socialist principles of election and recall through local councils and committees, and with a class analysis and orientation to our work.

"I hope this will help somewhat in building toward such an organization. As I said before I'm very interested in your newsletter idea and look forward to seeing the first copy.

"Fraternally,
C.E., Albuquerque, NM"

(Editorial Note: How about a reply, SRAF?)

A response from LED:

"...We are glad to learn that you are keenly interested in some sort of libertarian organization in this country. The question is just what form this should take. We are pretty well convinced that we do not want any centralized organization. We are well acquainted with the so-called 'democratic centralism' of the various groups who call themselves Marxist. As you know we are most familiar with the Socialist Labor Party and well know the authoritarianism of this organization while professing adherence to democracy in its conduct and for the future society it advocates.

"We feel that the first step is communication among those who are anti-authoritarians. Perhaps with that will come freely given cooperation and the creativity and efficiency of autonomy will be preserved. For this purpose we have decided to try to establish a newsletter to circulate among such persons and groups. Our letter relative to this is enclosed. Naturally we hope that you and your group will participate. We have had a number of responses so far but nothing tremendous but we are just beginning with this idea.

"I don't recall at the moment the SRAF declaration. But we have knowledge of their Bulletin and know some of their members. While we hope we can maintain friendly cooperation with SRAF, we have never considered entering the organizational framework they have set up. For one thing we are very distrustful of labels whether Marxist, socialist, communist or anarchist. While anarchists have understood the nature of authoritarianism well, we feel that there is much in their approach that is inadequate. Certainly the terrorist fringe is most hurtful to a sane solution of the social question. We prefer to be able to select useful ideas for social change from any source. We try to use a vocabulary that does not tie us to terms that often are misunderstood by rank and file workers including the word socialism. However we do probably wear uneasily the designation of libertarian socialist.

"As far as I could tell from your leaflets our positions are quite close. Your statement 'Under socialism all decisions would be made democratically through workers councils at work or citizens committees in the community.' is the subject of our pamphlet 'Community Economic Workshops'..."

BOOK REVIEW

Karl Hess, DEAR AMERICA, published by William Morrow and Co., Inc., New York, NY. ($7.95)

While this book may not yield many new basic ideas to libertarians, it nonetheless may be of great importance in the building of a free society. Hopefully it could function as a modern-day COMMON SENSE. Karl Hess, formerly a conservative ghost-writer for Republican candidates such as Goldwater, gives basic arguments why centralism and dependence on leaders must be rejected. Decentralized, local self-reliance is the alternative.

One of the most useful features of Hess' book is that his arguments and pleas for sane thinking are made in an interesting personal, narrative style. He relates in simple language the factors in his amazing intellectual transformation. This is a book that can be handed cold to a friend or fellow-worker in any stage of social thinking. Hess starts even before sound reasoning begins. He demolishes a number of mysticisms which keep so many people mentally imprisoned. The last two chapters are devoted to describing what he believes we can begin doing now.

The biggest disadvantage of the book is its price of $7.95. We have not been able to find out whether a low-cost paperback edition is planned. We hope that one is on the way.

A few quotations from this book follow:

"What I have learned about state socialism, roughly, is that it is an act of betrayal through which aspirations for a humane and cooperative way of living together and in peace are sacrificed to or stolen by bureaucrats who have contrived a new synthesis of capitalism's obsessive bookkeeping with feudalism's top-down, absolute authority. It seems the worst of all possible worlds, a mirror image of corporate capitalism, reflecting the same ultimate purpose: to produce a social order in which docile, carefully taught people follow, without whimper or shout, the commands of a ruling class."

"They /conservatives/ cry for self-reliance and conscience on the one hand, they scream for its abandonment on the other."

"The liberals and state socialists refer to the people and mean the leaders."

"Both Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler operated right-wing regimes, politically, despite the trappings of socialism with which both adorned their regimes."

"The overall characteristic of a right-wing regime, no matter the details of difference between this one and that one, is that it reflects the concentration of power in the fewest practical hands."

"Common sense, not great leaders, could save our lives, our sanity, and our country."

"The goal of leaders is to secure their own positions."

"The leaders have failed. Before that failure becomes fatal, it could be erased by the new age of fully participatory social organization, of control of production by those who produce, of mutual aid, of one stateless world, of privilege ended and responsibility begun, of order founded upon freedom (and not vice versa), of self-management.

"Utopia? No. Necessity."

"People who have never really cared, who have served only whatever master was most near or convenient, are least likely to change or to support change. They will change masters easily enough, as in the way so many conservatives changed to liberal-like groupies for Presidential power. They will change little else because they have little else to change, little to give but their loyalty. The same is true of partisan leftists who lose their minds to slogans and their actions first to demagogues, then to commissars, and finally to police sergeants."

"But what <u>is</u> in it for me? And can I work for change without posing as or seeming to be a force of history? Can I do it as a person among many people, a self among many selves, a neighbor among neighbors, in a neighborhood among neighborhoods, in a world which is a real and particular point in a real and at least recognizable universe?"

"What I want from social change is freedom from all those institutional chains which in the past have bound us to the purposes and projects of others, without consent, without real recourse. I want the freedom to be responsible for my own actions, and I want my actions to be judged by those whom those actions affect. I want my citizenship in a community to be a nondelegatable aspect of my life, reflecting my place in the community and respecting yours. I want to live in a community where people are so sure of themselves, as human beings, that they can respect differences in others without being deferential to difference, or frightened by it, or cowed by it. I want to join in the applause for a neighbor's task superbly done but I do not want to be enlisted in a fan club. I want to live in a community where, no matter any other skills, decent human beings all will practice those skills which all may possess in common, truthfulness, consideration of others, a sense of proportion in undertakings and in ambitions, and the various human traits associated with deep love of another and an abiding respectful sense of self.

"In practical terms, as it turns out, it means living very much as I live today. For me and for many people I know, social change has been made, even though we know it has been made within institutional spaces which could close at a moment's notice. Changes have been made. They have not been secured."

The following letter by a member of Buffalo Black Rose appeared in a Buffalo paper:

"West Side ecologists get in gear

"We are a small group of ecologists who live on the West Side. For some time now we've been involved with projects and ideas concerning neighborhood technology and self-sufficiency.

"Specific projects we have in mind include fish raising in basement-sized areas, vegetable farming in small areas. use of solar energy on a community scale, use of windmills as an urban energy source, effect of machine tools upon community self-reliance and redesign of community facilities including transportation.

"We don't have much money, so we'll start small using available resources and materials.

"One of our first projects will be finding space on the West Side--maybe a garage, warehouse, etc. From there we'd like to put together a community resource bank--canvassing the West Side for materials as well as skills. So often an emphasis is put on money when a wealth of material is laying in a heap in your basement, attic or garage.

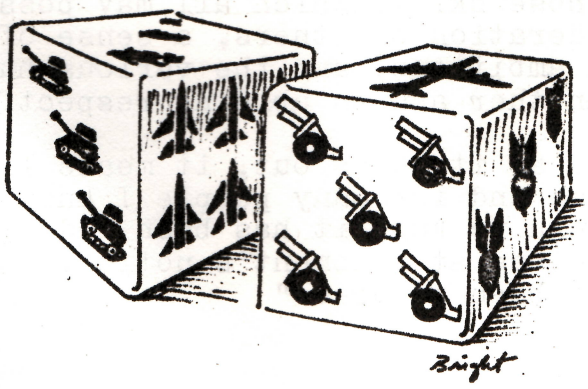
"As we depend on our neighbors on the West Side for so much, our projects will be open for anyone interested in helping and sharing.

"One of our basic principles is 'Do it, then teach it.' This means that the self-sufficiency of our forebearers has for the most part been lost in an era of TV dinners, electric can openers and cars; and that we ourselves are involved in this learning and teaching process.

"Interested? If any of our projects seems worthwhile to you or if you have an idea you'd like to share, maybe we can work together. Please contact us at 368 Baynes St., 1st floor, Buffalo, 14213.

"Richard Sprout
Neighborhood Self-Reliance"

* *



LEAGUE FOR ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

P.O. Box 1858, San Pedro, California 90733

Comrades and friends,

The League for Economic Democracy has felt for some time that there is a great need for better communication among those striving to build a non-authoritarian, free society and at the same time have rejected conspiratorial methods or senseless terrorism. This includes all those who are convinced that if mankind is to survive, both western capitalism and the bureaucratic despotism of Soviet Russia and China must be rejected for new societies in which people really control and manage their communities and work. For want of a better designation, the terms libertarian or council socialists sometimes have been applied to such movements. But regardless of what terms are used, there are many independent groups as well as individuals who are working for a non-authoritarian world.

We propose that a new-type newsletter be established that will circulate among such groups and individuals. The purpose of this newsletter would be to report national and international activities of those working for a self-managed society. Thus the ideas and materials developed in one area could help the work in other areas. Together we can accomplish much more. But we are definitely not thinking of attempting to form a centralized organization. Each group or individual participating in the newsletter would maintain whatever organizational arrangement and ties desired. Participants in the newsletter could outline general principles; activities; plans; leaflets, pamphlets, and books published and contemplated.

LED is willing to do the work to get this newsletter going (or is, of course, willing to cooperate with any other group that feels it would like to assume the responsibility). If LED does it, we would compile, mimeograph, mail, etc. If you or your group would like to participate in this project, please let us know as soon as possible. The cost to participants would be for materials used and postage. We suggest in your response that you supply the information requested on the enclosed information sheet. In addition, you could send any publications which indicate your work, literature, its prices, etc., and we will try to summarize. Our thought at this time is that the maximum space that would be allotted to each group participating would be in the order of one single-spaced typewritten page for each issue. (We have enclosed our publication "Community Economic Workshops" which will give some idea of our approach. Naturally, we do not necessarily expect full agreement with it.)

In solidarity,

League for Economic Democracy

INFORMATION SHEET (Use back and additional sheets when necessary)

NAME OF GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL

ADDRESS YOU WISH PUBLISHED

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

SOME DETAILS OF PAST AND CURRENT ACTIVITIES

PLANS FOR FUTURE ACTIVITIES

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS PUBLISHED--AVAILABILITY AND PRICES TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

LEAFLETS PUBLISHED AND AVAILABILITY TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THIS PROPOSED NEWSLETTER INCLUDING A NAME FOR IT.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS THAT YOU THINK MIGHT WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEWSLETTER.

HOW MANY COPIES WILL YOU WANT?_____(It will be more economical to mail several copies to the same address. As a rough guess we hope we will be able to supply single copies for 25¢ and multiple copies for 20¢ each. If you want to remit for the first issue we would be glad to have you enclose the amount as you return this sheet. Small sums can be sent as U.S. stamps.)

League for Economic Democracy
P.O. Box 1858, San Pedro, CA 90733